

NEW CANAL ENGINEER.

JOHN F. STEVENS CHOSEN.

Succeeds Mr. Wallace—Will Have Full Charge of Work on Isthmus.

[FROM THE TRIBUNE BUREAU.]
Washington, June 30.—Theodore P. Shonts, chairman of the Panama Canal Commission, today announced the selection of John F. Stevens as chief engineer of the canal.

Mr. Stevens succeeds John F. Wallace, whose resignation was accepted yesterday, and his appointment takes effect at once. Mr. Stevens will also be made general manager of the Panama Railroad. He will not be a member of the Isthmian Canal Commission. His salary will be \$30,000 a year.

The following official statement was made by Secretary Taft:

Mr. John F. Stevens has been appointed chief engineer of the Isthmian Canal, with residence on the Isthmus, to take effect at once. Mr. Stevens is now in the service of the Philippine Commission as government expert in the 1,000 miles of Philippine railways about to be constructed under government aid. Mr. Stevens was to have today accompanied Secretary Taft to the Philippines, but has been transferred to the Panama Canal. He was until recently vice-president and general manager of the Rock Island and system, formerly chief engineer and general manager of the Great Northern Railway, and has extensive experience in the construction, operation and management of large enterprises.

The duties of chief engineer of the Isthmian Canal especially relate to the practical work of construction and operation. The technical plans are to be determined by the commission, as a body, with the advisory international board of engineers recently appointed by the President, and where plans, as decided from stage to stage, will be executed on the Isthmus by the chief engineer. With the chief engineer confining himself to the actual work of construction and operation, and concentrating upon the execution of the plans as adopted by the commission, it is believed that the canal work will be more actively prosecuted.

CONFIDENCE IN MR. STEVENS.

"I have the utmost confidence in Mr. Stevens," said Chairman Shonts. "He is an engineer of unquestioned ability, but he is far more—he is a man with executive capacity of an exceptional character. What we need on the Isthmus is a leader of men, a man who knows how to drive, who expects from his subordinates, and how to enlist their enthusiasm and support; a man who will not waste his time figuring out technical details, but who will delegate that work to the board of expert engineers selected for that purpose, while he keeps his attention riveted on the larger end to be accomplished. That is the kind of man I believe John Stevens to be."

When it was suggested that Mr. Shonts had been exceptionally expeditious in making his selection, he said:

Perhaps not so expeditious as you think. While I could not believe that Mr. Wallace really contemplated throwing up his job, I could not count on his doing otherwise in the light of his career to the Secretary. So I got busy and under consideration, and this is my selection. It was not much trouble to find out Stevens' record and qualifications, because Colonel Edwards had been investigating them for a long time, and when I understood that a thing it was well done. Stevens is the man the Secretary had picked out to supervise the construction of the railroads in the Philippines, but he was just the man we needed for this work, and the Secretary allowed me to take him. I had a long talk with him in New-York on Tuesday afternoon. Then he left for Chicago, and promised to let me hear from him when he arrived there last night and talked decision. He arrived with his family this morning and I informed me that he would accept.

You know Stevens is the fellow who built the Rocky Mountain Division of the Great Northern road, which I understand to be one of the finest pieces of road in the world. He expended between \$600,000 and \$1,000,000 for J. J. Hill, and Mr. Hill has nothing but the highest praise for him. I could not want a better testimonial for him. Stevens is a stayer, too. He has received several flattering offers since he agreed to go out to the Philippines to take charge of the railroads for Secretary Taft, but would not listen to them.

When asked who was likely to be appointed assistant chief engineer, Mr. Shonts replied:

I don't know. That is a matter for Stevens to decide. He will have entire charge of his subordinates. That is my way of doing business. I pick out my man and ask him for results. I expect him to get them, but in his own way. When I ask a man to meet me at the office, I don't care how he gets there, and I don't presume to dictate to him whether he shall come in a cab or on foot. This is what I propose to do with Stevens. He is to dig that canal with the tools and the men he chooses. All we will ask of him is that he shall dig it.

SHONTS CRITICISES WALLACE.

Referring to the course of the ex-chief engineer, Mr. Shonts said Mr. Wallace had told him that he lost \$5,000 as the result of his absence from Chicago.

"A man ought to take that kind of thing as all in the course of a day," added Mr. Shonts. "Why, I lost \$500,000 on one transaction I was obliged to abandon because I had accepted the chairmanship of this commission. But I am not shedding any tears over it. Maybe I have lost more. I don't know. But I do know that I shall stick by the President and Secretary Taft and Governor Macdonald as long as they stick to me, and if the time ever comes when I do want to give up, I won't take a step until I have talked it all over with them."

Mr. Stevens is to accompany Chairman Shonts to the Isthmus in the immediate future, and it is expected that all necessary data will be available in time for the meeting of the board of consulting engineers on September 1. A meeting of the Canal Commission will be held here to-morrow.

John F. Stevens is now fifty-two years old. He was born in Gardiner, Me. When he was twenty-one years old he was assistant engineer of the city of Minneapolis, holding the place two years. He then entered railway service, having charge of the surveys and acting as chief engineer of the Sabine Pass and Northwestern Railway until 1873. He then held the following positions: From 1873 to 1880, assistant engineer of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway; 1880 to 1882, assistant engineer, Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway; 1882 to 1886, assistant and division engineer, Canadian Pacific Railway; 1886, assistant engineer, Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul; 1887 to 1889, principal assistant engineer, Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic Railway; 1889, assistant engineer, Spokane Falls and

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